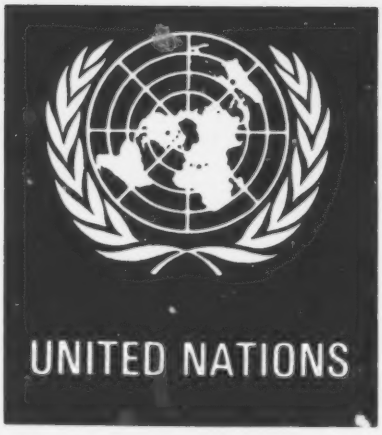

DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

Twenty-fourth United Nations Seminar
on the Question of Palestine
(Fourth Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar)

5 - 9 February 1990

and

First United Nations Latin American
and Caribbean Regional NGO Symposium
on the Question of Palestine

5 - 8 February 1990

Buenos Aires

Theme: "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people"

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I

REPORT OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE (FOURTH LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL SEMINAR)

BUENOS AIRES
5 - 9 FEBRUARY 1990

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Introduction

1. The Twenty-fourth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Fourth Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar) with the theme: "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people", was held jointly with the First Latin American and Caribbean Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 5 to 9 February 1990, in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 44/41 B of 6 December 1989.

2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of H.E. Mr. Oscar Oscar Oramas-Oliva (Cuba), head of the delegation; H.E. Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta); H.E. Mr. Dragoslav Pejic (Yugoslavia); and Mr. Zuhdi Labib Terzi (Palestine). Mr. Oramas-Oliva was Chairman of the Seminar, Mr. Borg Olivier, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur, and Mr. Pejic, Vice-Chairman.

3. Nine meetings were held and fourteen panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine. Representatives of 34 Governments, Palestine, 2 United Nations organs, 3 United Nations specialized agencies and bodies, and 2 intergovernmental organizations participated in the Seminar. Representatives of 27 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended the Seminar as observers.

A. Opening statements

Statement of the Secretary of State for Special Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina

4. The joint opening ceremony of the Seminar and NGO Symposium heard a statement by H.E. Dr. Alfredo Carim Yoma, Secretary of State for Special Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, in which the Secretary of State stressed that there was now a time of great changes in the international sphere. For the first time since the Second World War, the cause of détente and democracy was beginning to prevail following several decades of armed peace and distrust in many countries, especially in Europe. The parties to many regional conflicts were engaging in a dialogue instead of violence, the use of arms and force, and coercion in the attempt to impose their ideas.

5. One such area of war and international danger, however, continued to smoulder and the community of peace-loving nations had to employ its best endeavours to chart a course leading to just solutions to the Middle East conflict, of which the so-called "Question of Palestine" was the core.

6. The Argentine Republic associated itself with those efforts. The holding of the meeting in Buenos Aires reflected the will of the Argentine people to help to bring about a peaceful and negotiated settlement to the question of Palestine. The Argentine Government had gladly agreed to host that very important event, which undoubtedly would advance the cause of peace in the Middle East.

7. The regional seminars and symposia which the United Nations had been organizing each year played an important role, particularly with regard to the understanding which the world public had of the question of Palestine. They constituted important channels for discussion and the dissemination of information on that problem through the participation of prominent figures from the world of diplomacy and international politics. Such events helped to make the world aware of an ineluctable reality: the necessity of the Palestinian people's freely determining its destiny within a national framework of its own.

8. The Argentine Government had consistently supported the United Nations resolutions dealing with the Middle East and Palestine, in the conviction that these texts (particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973)) held the key to a definitive solution. That conflict had existed almost since the very beginning of the United Nations, which was accordingly the most appropriate framework for finding lasting solutions guaranteed by the full weight of the international community's opinion. It was precisely for that reason that Argentina supported the convening of an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations as an appropriate way of attaining the important objective of achieving peace and an equitable solution.

9. Dr. Yoma emphasized that Argentina was a suitable venue for the holding of the present meeting since it was home to sizeable communities of Jews and Arabs who had arrived in various waves of immigration. They had prospered in peaceful coexistence, practicing their religion, their traditions and their own customs. It should be understood that in the light of that experience, there was confidence in the possibility of peace.

10. He said that the President of Argentina, Dr. Carlos Saúl Menem, like many other Argentines, was a descendant of the waves of immigration. It could not be accepted with indifference that the Middle East problem should be indefinitely prolonged and allowed to become more acute. For that reason, President Menem had offered his good offices and had made himself available to contribute to a peaceful rapprochement, and had expressed constructive readiness in his addresses to the General Assembly of the United Nations and at the Non-Aligned Movement.

11. Argentina was part of the vast international majority of countries that made efforts in favour of peace, which meant for Israel the security of living with secure frontiers, and the corresponding right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to live in its own territory.

12. He expressed his conviction that a just and equitable peace would save much pain, suffering and sacrifice. It was inconceivable to Argentina that the return of the people of Israel from their age-old and painful Diaspora should necessarily mean the beginning of another equally unjust suffering - the Diaspora of the millions of men and women making up the Palestinian nation.

13. On behalf of the President of the Nation and of the entire Argentine people, he wished the meeting every success in its work.

Message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations

14. A message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, was read by his Representative, Mr. Naseem Mirza, Chief, Division for Palestinian Rights. The message noted that the convening of the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was testimony to the importance that the United Nations attached to solving the question of Palestine, which formed the root cause of the conflict in the Middle East, and it affirmed that the efforts to find a solution to the problem continued to be one of the most important preoccupations of the United Nations.

15. The message stressed that the Latin American and Caribbean countries had actively contributed to the important efforts undertaken at the United Nations to bring a just peace to the Middle East on the basis of the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions which, inter alia, recognized the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The sustained participation of those countries in the international efforts to accelerate the peace process in the Middle East constituted a highly significant factor in achieving a comprehensive solution of the Middle East conflict.

16. The eminence of the diplomats, scholars, experts and committed and experienced NGO representatives at the Seminar and NGO Symposium was impressive. An enlightened and mobilized public opinion could play a very important part in advancing the peace process in the Middle East.

17. The Palestinian uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, which had now entered its third year, remained a matter of serious international concern. In contrast to the nuances of the diplomatic process, the message of the intifadah was direct and unequivocal, namely, that the Israeli occupation, which had been in effect for 22 years, would continue to be rejected, and that the Palestinian people would remain committed to the exercise of its legitimate political rights, including self-determination.

18. During the past year, confrontations involving Israelis and Palestinians had continued unabated, with much bloodshed. Hundreds had been killed and thousands wounded, including many children. Incarcerations on a large scale had continued. In the message, the Secretary-General recalled that during the past year, he had repeatedly expressed concern at these widespread violations of human rights and had joined the Security Council and General Assembly in calling upon Israel to abide by its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention. In that atmosphere, it seemed to him imperative that a way must soon be found to begin an effective negotiating process that could restore hope in the possibility that a just and durable peace could be attained.

19. The General Assembly, in its resolution 44/42 had called once again for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based

on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. The General Assembly had also invited the Security Council to consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the establishment of a preparatory committee. It also had requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned and, in consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference.

20. The message recalled that, during the past year, the United Nations had been intensely involved in activities to bring peace to troubled regions of the world. It stressed that the Middle East was an explosive area and events or trends in one place almost invariably had repercussions elsewhere. The regret of the Secretary-General at the lack of progress in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict was all the greater given the significant steps that had been taken towards the resolution of other disputes.

21. The Secretary-General, in the conclusion of his message, said that it was essential that a fully concerted and well co-ordinated effort be made by the international community to help the parties enter into an effective negotiating process that would lead to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. For his part, he would do all that he could to discharge the responsibilities entrusted to him in that regard. He conveyed his appreciation for the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which had carried out its mandate with dedication in order to achieve a just solution to the question of Palestine. He also congratulated the Government of Argentina for graciously providing the venue for the important meeting.

Statement of the Chairman of the Seminar

22. Mr. Oramas-Oliva, head of the delegation of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and Chairman of the Seminar, emphasized that the Committee was extremely pleased that the Seminar and NGO Symposium were being held in the capital of Argentina, a country with a proud history of struggle for independence and a long-standing tradition of support for the full exercise by all peoples of their national sovereignty and right to self-determination.

23. For over 40 years, the United Nations had continued its tireless efforts to bring about a negotiated solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East which took into account, inter alia, the needs and interests of all parties concerned. As part of that effort, the General Assembly had declared in 1975 that the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter was a prerequisite to the achievement of peace in that region and had established the Committee. In order to further mobilize world public opinion in support of the Palestinian cause, the Committee had organized, since 1980, a number of seminars and symposia and had prepared and disseminated studies and publications.

24. The Seminar and Symposium took on a special significance and urgency, in order to provide important moral support for the courageous uprising of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, the intifadah, which had now entered its third year. There was general agreement that an irreversible process had been set in motion and that the current situation challenged not only the statesmanship but also the sense of humanity and compassion of those who were trying to end the diplomatic impasse which that conflict had reached in order to arrive urgently at a settlement. The intifadah confirmed in no uncertain terms that the Palestinians were determined to put an end to Israeli occupation and to exercise their national rights in accordance with international principles and United Nations resolutions, despite the continuing great toll in human lives and suffering. The proclamation at Algiers on 15 November 1988 of an independent Palestinian State and the Palestinian peace initiative and important statements made subsequently by Chairman Yasser Arafat at the General Assembly meeting at Geneva in December 1988 had generated widespread international support and given a new impetus to the peace process. The declaration of independence and the proclamation of the independent State of Palestine had already been recognized or noted with satisfaction by over 110 States. Other countries which had not yet done so had nevertheless expressed support for that action by the representatives of the Palestinian people and had hailed it as a concrete and positive first step towards peace in the Middle East region.

25. All those facts amply illustrated the international community's determination to promote a just and lasting solution to that tragic problem. The Committee therefore deeply regretted that the Government of Israel had so far not responded positively to the Palestinian peace initiative or recognized the legitimacy of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The Committee had repeatedly urged the leaders of Israel to rise to the historic occasion presented by recent developments and by the favourable international climate, and to join the international consensus on the modalities for a solution of the conflict. The continued bloodshed in the occupied Palestinian territory and the increased reliance by Israel on armed repression, beatings and administrative detention, as well as collective punishments such as closure of schools and destruction of houses, demonstrated that unfortunately Israel had continued to turn a deaf ear to those appeals.

26. It was none the less encouraging to note that many sectors of the Israeli public were far ahead of their Government in that regard. Ample evidence of that was afforded by the significant increase in participation by Israeli NGOs and individuals, including well-known personalities from the mainstream of Israeli politics, in seminars and meetings of NGOs organized by the Committee. The same could be said of Jewish organizations in North America and Western Europe.

27. The movement of solidarity on the part of certain sectors of Israel's population had become more apparent over the course of the past year, with the increase in joint activities between Palestinians, including the PLO representatives, and Israeli nationals. Conferences at which politicians and personalities from the two sides had come together to discuss their problems and differences and to develop ways to solve them had been held in Jerusalem itself, as well as in Prague, Paris, The Hague, Oxford and at Columbia University in New York.

28. Regardless of the unbending position still exposed by the Israeli Government, and despite its efforts to stop the contacts between Israelis and Palestinians, it was now certain that a historic turning-point had been reached in that conflict and that a negotiating process was indeed possible. The Committee hoped that the participants in the seminar and symposium would join in the call on the Israeli authorities finally to muster the necessary political will and to abandon their maximalist ideologies and their intolerance and to join the initiatives for a real peace with justice and security for all. The Chairman concluded by saying that the year 1990, the beginning of the final decade of the century and of the millennium, should become the year of peace in that region of the world, which had seen so much bloodshed and suffering.

Message from the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization

29. A message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, was read out by H.E. Mr. Ahmad Sobeh, Officer-in-charge of the Palestine section at the League of Arab States in Brazil. The message expressed high appreciation for the active efforts that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People continued to make with a view to enabling the Palestinian people to regain and to exercise its legitimate national rights. He conveyed profound thanks to Argentina and to its President, Government and people for hosting the meeting in Buenos Aires. That occasion should provide a good opportunity to further Argentinian-Palestinian relations through increased support by the Argentinian Government and its President for the Palestinian people and for its just struggle in the form of recognition of the State of Palestine. There could be no doubt that a step of such importance on the part of Argentina would have a great impact on all the States and Governments of the continent and that they would be prompted to emulate it.

30. The message referred to the national uprising of the Palestinian people against Israeli occupation which was currently entering its twenty-seventh month. Through the intifadah, the Palestinian people was affirming its determination and resolve to continue its just struggle and to maintain its national resistance under the leadership of the PLO, its sole legitimate representative, in order to end the Israeli occupation of its land and to re-establish its inalienable national rights, including its right to return, to self-determination and to establish an independent State with its capital at Jerusalem.

31. The Seminar and Symposium were also being held while the violence and repression practised by Israel against the Palestinian people were increasing in severity and while the Israeli Government continued to reject all international peace initiatives aimed at achieving a just and lasting peace in the region and at enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its rights. The recent acts of confrontation and barbaric repression carried out by Israeli military and police forces against the international peace demonstration held at the end of 1989 in Jerusalem, were clear proof of the continued Israeli

intransigence and persistent Israeli policy of deception and the advancement of schemes opposed to the achievement by the Palestinian people of its legitimate national rights. That had the purpose of protracting and perpetuating the Israeli occupation and expelling the Palestinian people from its land. That had been affirmed by Mr. Shamir, the Israeli Prime Minister, in calling for the retention of the occupied Palestinian territory for the purpose of absorbing new Jewish immigrants.

32. The message continued that Israeli intransigence and rejectionism required that the entire community of nations and all those peoples and forces in the world which cherished justice, freedom and peace should increasingly work together and co-ordinate their efforts to bring active and effective pressure to bear on the Israeli Government to comply with the resolutions backed by international legitimacy. A just and comprehensive peace could thus be achieved in the region and all of its peoples, including the Palestinian people, could live in freedom, peace and stability and without war, violence and threat of force and could use their capacities and abilities to contribute constructively to the development and progress of human civilization.

33. The Seminar and Symposium were being held in the prevailing climate of international reconciliation and détente in the world. There was, in particular, the surge of change in Eastern Europe, which indicated that international reconciliation was beginning to forge ahead and strike roots in the interest of the right of all peoples to enjoy freedom, dignity and national independence, to live in a democratic environment and to choose their national leadership without interference and in a democratic manner. The Palestinian people had been struggling to achieve those lofty goals since its revolution was launched 25 years ago. The message expressed confidence that the people's national uprising and Israel's repressive practices had had a major impact and had effectively provided a model for the struggle for freedom and democracy in many countries. Accordingly, the Palestinian people looked with hope and high confidence to the community of nations and those forces which cherish freedom, justice and peace to step up their support for the Palestinian peace initiative, which clearly affirmed the genuine desire of the Palestinian people to achieve a just and lasting peace in the region through the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions and of its right to self-determination.

Other statements

34. At the opening meeting statements in support of the Palestinian people's struggle to exercise their inalienable rights, were also made by Mr. Oramas-Oliva on behalf of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; Mr. Virendra Gupta on behalf of the Special Committee against Apartheid; Mr. Sufian Barazi on behalf of the League of Arab States; and Mr. Pejic on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Messages adopted by the participants

35. The participants in the Seminar and NGO Symposium adopted a message of protest to the Foreign Minister of Israel (annex I). They also adopted a message to Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO (annex II) and a motion of thanks to the Government and people of Argentina (annex III).

B. Panel presentations

36. Three panels were established. The panels and the panelists were as follows:

Panel I: (i) "The urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East"; (ii) "The intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory and its impact on the achievement of a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict":

Archbishop Hilarion Capucci (Palestinian), Mr. Pedro Catella (Argentina), Mr. Amos Kenan (Israel), Mr. Luciano Ozorio Rosa (Brazil), Mr. Isam Kamel Salem (Palestinian), Mrs. Francisca Sauquillo (Spain), Mr. Ricardo Valero (Mexico), H.E. Mr. Alberto Velazco-San José (Cuba).

Panel II: "The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the Palestinian people":

Ms. Wedjan Al-Borno (Palestinian).

Panel III: "The mobilization of public opinion in the Latin American and Caribbean region for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people":

Mr. Thomas W. Gittens (Guyana), Mr. Jean-Marie Lambert (Office of the International Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine), Mr. Carlos Pachá (Argentina), Mr. Manuel Felipe Sierra (Venezuela), Mr. William Waack (Brazil).

Panel I

(i) "The urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East"; (ii) "The intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory and its impact on the achievement of a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict"

37. Archbishop Hilarion Capucci (Palestinian), said that he was not a politician, but as Archbishop of Jerusalem, the city of peace, he saw himself as a messenger of peace. He stressed that the frontiers of peace in today's world were being violated almost everywhere. The hottest and most vulnerable zone was the Middle East. He then described the suffering of the Palestinian people. Part of that people was suffering because it was living in exile, far from its country. A second part was suffering because it was living in refugee camps in inhuman conditions, deprived of the most elementary human rights. He recalled the massacre at Sabra and Shatila in 1982. A third part of the Palestinian people was suffering because it was living under the occupation. Palestinians were martyred, mistreated, manhandled, driven to a savage repression of the occupiers. The intifadah was the way of the Palestinian people to show the world that their life under the occupation was no longer bearable or tolerable. The Palestinians wanted to live in dignity, in an independent and sovereign homeland and were resolved to continue the peaceful struggle until liberation and victory were attained.

38. He condemned terrorism as a cancer which had to be attacked by its roots, the reasons which gave rise to it. As Archbishop of Jerusalem he had to make every effort to put an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people. He stressed that the Palestinians possessed all the characteristics of a people: a history, a culture, a tradition, customs, habits, a folklore, a dialect. Therefore, they must enjoy the right of all peoples, the right to self-determination and to a homeland. Owing to the radical change of the position of the Arabs, in particular the Palestinians, a peaceful solution had become feasible. He called for a dialogue between the Israelis and the Palestinians through an international peace conference presided over by the five permanent members of the Security Council and with the participation of all parties involved in the conflict. That conference should lead to the establishment in Palestine of two neighbouring, distinct and independent States, one of them Jewish and the other Palestinian, co-operating with each other for the advancement of the two countries and the well-being of the two peoples. For the Israelis the only alternative was either peace in exchange for the occupation or the territories in exchange for peace. Occupation and peace together would be an illusion. He concluded in vowing to continue the peaceful struggle until victory was won, a victory which had no victors and no vanquished, but a victory of justice, of friendship, and of peace.

39. Mr. Pedro Catella (Argentina), expressed the view that, because of the Arab-Israeli war, since 1948 the Palestinian question had been moving on a track, which was not the track leading directly to the national liberation of the Palestinian people. National struggles had always been waged and won by people fighting with their feet firmly planted on their own land. Referring to the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, he pointed out that the

United Nations at the time of the resolution of "partition" was the United Nations of the victors of the Second World War, i.e., the great colonial powers. He described the Jewish policy towards the Palestinians as planned genocide, which forced many Palestinians to leave their homeland and which led to the confrontation between the new State of Israel and the Arab countries. An important step forward was the creation of the PLO in 1964, but it was mainly the exiles' fight. The third and decisive chapter of the Palestinian struggle was opened by the intifadah, which brought the fight back to the territory of Palestine. He, then, characterized the Jewish claims on Palestine as irrational, immoral and illegal, as a result of the colonialist mentality of the time.

40. The intifadah, he continued, was a revolution against a century of irrationality, immorality and illegitimacy. It was the just revolt of the oppressed against the unjust oppression of the invaders. The intifadah had exposed to broad daylight the omissions and falsehoods of the propaganda disseminated by the media. It had shown that the Palestinian people existed and that it was solidly united and disciplined and capable of mobilizing itself. One positive outcome of the intifadah, he stressed, had been the decision by the United States Government to review its policy on the Palestinian question, with regard to the PLO and the cutting back of its hitherto unconditional support for the State of Israel. Mr. Catella concluded that the intifadah had put Palestine on the road to peace. The intifadah represented a clarification of positions and the culmination of a century of struggle by the Palestinian people to win acceptance of its rights.

41. Mr. Amos Kenan, writer and peace activist from Israel, pointed out that, historically, the Arab-Israeli conflict was already more than a century old. It was a dispute between two nations - two national movements - about the same piece of land and territory. Zionism on the one hand and the Palestinian movement on the other, were delayed action and manifestation of the great nationalistic movements in Europe since 1848. But history was not just a subject-matter for historians. History was being created now. He stressed that it was not easy to remain objective in a matter that involved life and death, hatred, tragedy, suspicion and fear. But the necessity to create a dialogue between Israel and Palestine should overcome any remainders of distrust and animosity. It was of no doubt today, that the Palestinians had right and a claim on Palestine, as it was of no doubt that a Palestinian State already existed. He said that in the same way there was no need to prove that Israel existed. Unfortunately, the evolution of Israeli and Palestinian public opinion had been moving in opposite directions. Today, it was the Israeli Government and not the PLO, that was obstructing the process of peace and reconciliation. The more the PLO was extending a hand to Israel, the more that hand was refused. And the more the Palestinian public became more realistic, more mature and sophisticated, the more the Israeli leadership was becoming belligerent, irrational, racist and unhuman.

42. Mr. Kenan pointed out that the continuing effort of Israel to crush the intifadah - a hopeless effort - was corrupting and dehumanizing Israeli society. The Israeli-Palestinian war should end immediately and a Palestinian State should be created in the occupied territory, i.e., West Bank and Gaza Strip with Jerusalem as the capital for both States.

43. Mr. Luciano Ozorio Rosa, Minister-Counsellor at the Embassy of Brazil in Buenos Aires, analysed the current situation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and emphasized that for the first time conditions existed for a lasting settlement. The Arabs had now substituted a pragmatic approach for their traditional attachment to principles. The PLO had ended its challenge to Israel's right to exist as an independent State. With the PLO, the overwhelming majority of the Arab States now accepted Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the other relevant United Nations resolutions. The declaration of independence of Palestine was founded on a two-State solution. He noted that East-West détente created an atmosphere that should be conducive to the co-operation of the two super-Powers in a serious effort to solve the problem of the Middle East. However, it would be unrealistic to hope that a just and lasting settlement could be achieved by a joint effort of the United States and the Soviet Union in disregard of the interest of the neighbouring Arab States. It could also not be attained by unilateral action. Characterizing the four-point plan adopted by the Israeli Cabinet, he stressed that it came short of the Camp David agreement and could not be seriously regarded as a step forward. The plan refused to recognize the Palestinians as a people and precluded negotiations with the PLO or participation of the Palestinian diaspora.

44. He continued by saying that the United States Administration was seen by all concerned parties in the region as the unconditional supporter of Israel, thus undermining its role as a mediator. He pointed out that an international framework offered better chances for a peaceful and fair accommodation. Such a framework could be structured in such a way as to foster direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, with due consideration to the interests of neighbouring Arab States and enforceable security safeguards for all parties. A crucial issue was to determine the economic assistance to be underwritten by the extra-regional participants. The International Conference should be convened on the basis of General Assembly resolution 43/176. It was necessary to define the geographical borders of the two States which would coexist in Palestine. He argued that the coalition Government in Israel seemed not inclined to a territorial compromise. The expected surge of Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries introduced a new and disturbing factor in the Middle East question and enhanced the urgency of convening an international conference. After characterizing the intifadah and the Israeli reaction, he expressed the view that the slow steps foreseen by current peace initiatives in the Middle East could soon be superseded by the dynamics of the situation in the occupied territories. The intifadah had generated a violent reaction on the part of the Jewish settlers. He noted that that "counter intifadah" seemed to escalate and could soon erode the prestige of moderate Arab leaders, thus jeopardizing their ability to support the current moves by the PLO towards a peaceful and comprehensive solution of the Middle East conflict.

45. He concluded by saying that the four decades of recurrent wars in the region had brought forth two significant political realities: the consolidation of the national identity of the Palestinian people and the amalgamation of the State of Israel and the world-wide recognition of its pre-1967 borders. He urged all responsible leaders in the world to expedite the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

46. Mr. Isam Kamel Salem, Ambassador of Palestine in Berlin, emphasized that the problem of Palestine was the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. He stated that there was now an unparalleled international consensus on the need to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. That conference was the only alternative to the perpetuation of an explosive, dangerous situation which posed a permanent threat to the peace and security of the entire world. Referring to a number of United Nations resolutions, he stressed the importance of General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 2 December 1988, which offered a sound and impartial basis for the convening and the work of the conference. He then highlighted Israel's negative attitude towards the basic principles which constituted the framework for the conference. Its intransigence should be seen not as opposition to the peace conference but as opposition to peace itself. Israel's real policy was to perpetuate its occupation of the Palestinian-Arab territories. With a clear lack of all objectivity, sincerity and honesty the proposals by Israel aimed to conceal its systematic policy of annexation and expansion.

47. He pointed out that Israel had recently been obliged to change its tactics because of the tremendous impact of the intifadah, the Jordanian legal and administrative rupture with the Palestinian West Bank, the change in the American attitude towards the Palestinian problem and the international isolation of Israel. But the Israeli autonomy plan failed to satisfy even minimally the aspiration of the Palestinian people. He noted that intifadah and peace in the Middle East were complementary. The uprising highlighted the fact that Israel was simply a colonial and repressive Power without human and democratic ideals. Drawing conclusions he emphasized that the question of Palestine was one of the most critical and complex problems of the time and that there was an urgent need to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

48. The continuation of the conflict was due to Israel's policy of occupation and repression against the Palestinian people and the Arab peoples. The intifadah should be understood and viewed within the context of the search for a political solution. It had radically transformed the political realities in the region and in the international arena with regard to the problem of Palestine. It had, furthermore, placed the problem of Palestine in its just context as a Palestinian national liberation struggle against Israeli occupation. The PLO was the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and an essential factor in the search for peace. The solution would have to be negotiated solely with the PLO. He stressed that the United Nations would have to play a fundamental role in the search for a settlement of the conflict. The convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East had been universally recognized as necessary and urgent. The Security Council should proceed without delay to consider the measures needed in order to convene the conference. As an interim measure he proposed to place the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel under the provisional control of the United Nations with the aim of alleviating the sufferings of the Palestinian people and guaranteeing their physical, legal and political security.

49. Mrs. Francisca Sauquillo, Senator from Spain, noted that since 1948 numerous peace proposals for ending the Middle East conflict had failed through lack of a profound desire for peace. Recent initiatives were regarded as ineffective since they did not take into account several important political aspects of the question of the Middle East and always tended to protect a set of hidden interests. Accordingly, the international community was inclined towards the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East with the participation of all interested parties, which could begin open and direct negotiations. She stressed that the Israeli strategy in the occupied territory was taking advantage of an upsurge of Islamic fundamentalism and a dangerous escalation of violence and seemed to be designed to force the Palestinians in the West Bank to emigrate. She characterized the intifadah as a popular revolution which signified rejection of the Israeli occupation and had strengthened the Palestinian identity and the role of the PLO. Referring to the Camp David accords she expressed the view that bilateralism had proved ineffective by not including all the parties involved in the conflict. Awareness of that situation had led to a move towards a consensus regarding the idea of an international peace conference.

50. She emphasized that a solution should involve recognizing the PLO as a representative that could participate in the peace process, so that it would be possible to convene an international peace conference as an appropriate forum for direct negotiations between the parties involved and with the participation of the PLO. Analysing the Palestinian position she stressed the objective of ensuring the right of the Palestinian Arab people to exercise self-determination, while at the same time making arrangements for security and peace in all States of the region. As to the Israeli position, especially the Likud leadership, she noted a will to settle the Palestinian question, but always with territorial ambitions on the part of Israel, which made a dialogue on solving the problem difficult.

51. Referring to the dialogue between the United States and the PLO, she said that it had to be seen as the recognition by the United States that the PLO was in the nature of a representative of the Palestinian people which was searching for a solution to the Middle East conflict. Also the Soviet Union was seeking to act with greater realism and tended to move away from rigid stands. The result of the new climate in international relations was a general agreement that an international peace conference must be held. She emphazised that a solution to the Palestinian question presupposed a dialogue among all parties involved in the conflict, not armed confrontations. The Government of Israel, especially the Likud leadership, must convince itself that the defence of its State and of peace in the region demanded a dialoque with the PLO and the exchange of land for peace. The United States and the Soviet Union must come to an agreement, in turn, to act not only jointly but in a way that led to a peaceful solution satisfactory to both parties. Israel must move towards an understanding with the Palestinians that would allow a lasting solution to the conflict. In the context of the peace conference, Israel must accept a dialogue with the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The European Community for its part stood ready to contribute to such understanding between Israelis and Palestinians and to provide all possible economic and political aid to bring that project to fruition.

52. Mr. Ricardo Valero, former Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mexico, referred to the great and decisive changes and transformations that were taking place in the world and said that the new climate of détente led also to the beginning of a negotiated and peaceful settlement of regional conflicts. He expressed the view that global détente could only foster the solution of the Middle East conflict. The events of the last 40 years, and especially the last two years of the intifadah had shown that the use of force was not a viable way to settle the problem. That period had also shown that it was not possible to achieve peace through partial solutions, like the Camp David accords. He stressed that the intifadah was the direct result of 21 years of Israeli occupation. He welcomed the decisions of the Palestine National Council and emphasized that they not only helped to overcome obstacles, but also to win international approval from numerous States and multilateral bodies. He mentioned that that move had opened the doors to direct dialogue between the PLO and the United States of America.

53. Analysing recent initiatives aimed at finding a solution to the conflict, namely the plan of the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and the complementary proposal submitted by the United States Secretary of State James Baker, Mr. Valero stressed that it was important that the immediate parties to the conflict had the lawful right to choose their representatives. The existing political situation called for the involvement of the PLO as an active and essential party in any peace initiative affecting the interests and fate of its people. He further mentioned that it was apparent that neither of the initiatives provided for the unconditional, immediate and complete withdrawal of the occupying army. Similarly, the initiatives did not provide for the full exercise of the universally recognized Palestinian national rights, and therefore failed to take into account and act in accordance with the principles of the Charter and numerous resolutions of the United Nations. Furthermore, the initiatives ignored, set aside and failed to resolve various fundamental aspects of the regional conflict, for example the question of East Jerusalem, the Syrian Arab Golan, and internationally recognized borders, the security of countries, the denuclearization of the region and others. Several stages must aim at bringing about a comprehensive and complete settlement of the entire conflict, because otherwise there was the risk and growing danger that partial solutions would give rise to further obstacles and, worse yet, would become nothing but manoeuvres favouring one of the parties and polarizing the others. Initiatives should be part of, and form a preliminary to, a process of comprehensive negotiations for truly bringing about a just settlement of the conflict in all its aspects and dimensions. It was becoming necessary to link all partial peace initiatives to the most important process aimed at a comprehensive settlement through the holding of an international peace conference.

54. Mr. Alberto Velazco-San José, Director for North African and Middle East Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, pointed out that the Palestinian uprising had become the catalyst of a whole process which was taking place in the Middle East region and which had given a new dimension to the prolonged Arab-Israeli conflict. For the first time since its foundation, the State of Israel was forced to go on the defensive in the diplomatic and political areas. The intifadah had shaken the Israeli society itself and had

confirmed the firm determination of the Palestinian people to achieve the rights of return, self-determination and independence. He emphasized that the price being paid by the Palestinian people was high, but necessary. Referring to their suffering and bloodshed, he said, that the Palestinians were being subjected to the same policies and practices as those applied by the creators of the ghettos, gas chambers, concentration camps and the massive deportations of Jewish citizens in Europe. He noted that today many Western countries had become aware of the real situation in the occupied territories and had begun to modify their positions. The image of Israel had suffered serious setbacks among its own allies.

55. He stressed that the intifadah had created a new situation in the region and had brought nearer the possibility of a negotiated solution to the Middle East conflict and in particular to the Palestine question. He stated that today more than ever, there was a need for the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The members of the PLO, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, must participate in the conference on an equal footing. The holding of that conference would not be easy because of the interests of those opposing it and in particular the negative attitude of the Governments of the United States and Israel, which persisted in offering different plans and compromise formulae which sought only to reduce the part to be played by the PLO. He stressed that international public opinion must be mobilized against those plans and in favour of the urgent convening of the International Peace Conference. In conclusion, he emphasized that in Latin America it was imperative to promote a broad movement designed to secure the recognition of the Palestinian State.

Panel II

"The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the Palestinian people"

56. Ms. Wejdan Al-Borno, Palestinian and doctor in English philology, dealt in her paper with the situation of Palestinian women. She referred to the nineteenth session of the Palestine National Council, which had declared the establishment of the State of Palestine - a State in which government policy would be based on the principles of social justice, equality and non-discrimination with respect to the exercise of the rights of men and women, regardless of colour, race or creed. The Council had paid a special tribute to the heroic Palestinian women. To that end, Palestinian women had fought to increase their influence in all spheres - political, economic, social and cultural. A major role in that process had been played by the General Union of Palestinian Women, established in 1965 in unison with the Palestinian revolution. The Union was the organization representing women, and provided an essential base for their struggle. From the start, it had its various activities and achievements, among them: socio-cultural programmes through literary centres, vocational training and establishment of an extensive network of day-care and pre-school centres in refugee camps, setting up of food-production and nutrition centres, training in civil defence and

relief, as well as participation in the armed struggle, development of relations with various organizations in the Palestinian, Arab and international spheres. Palestinian women not only were active within the framework of the Union, but went further by joining various Palestinian associations and trade unions.

57. She stated that by the midpoint of the current decade, Palestinian women had achieved a high level of participation in workshops run by the Palestine Martyrs' Works Society or SAMED, which had a preferential employment policy for the families of martyrs, with women making up 67 and 27 per cent of the membership of the two governing bodies. There had also been an increase from 4 per cent to the current level of 10 per cent in the representation of women within the various political departments and organs such as the Palestine National Council. She mentioned further the development of social-welfare services provided by women to the Palestinian masses in exile. She underscored the participation of women in the work-force.

58. She further stressed that the Palestinian women's struggle for the right to work, for improved living conditions and to have social needs and union demands met was inseparable from the Palestinian people's struggle to attain its national rights. Women's activities could not be separated from the socio-political context in which they lived, thus, the women's movement in the occupied territories was undergoing a reorganization which corresponded to the inexorable political progress of the Palestinian national forces under the PLO. As a consequence, working women's institutions and organizations had grown both quantitatively and qualitatively at the same time that new models and concepts of political behaviour for women had been created within the social field. One example was the increase in the number of highly specialized professional women working at Palestinian universities, as well as the role of Palestinian women in the field of literature.

59. In the intifadah, women were playing a leading role through the people's committees, which provided support ranging from economic assistance, education, health care and first aid services for the welfare and upkeep of the families of detainees, deported persons and martyrs. Lastly, over the past 25 years there had been a 3 per cent increase in the birth rate, which represented another aspect of women's struggle for freedom, national dignity, the right to self-determination, the right of return, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on their own land: Palestine.

Panel III

"The mobilization of public opinion in the Latin American and Caribbean region for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people"

60. Mr. Thomas W. Gittens, Lecturer in International Studies at the University of Guyana, referred to recent developments in the Middle East region and noted that there was still much that divided the positions of the

Israelis and the Palestinians. The intifadah with the world-wide sympathy which it had garnered had both returned the Palestinian question to a global interest and made its resolution a matter of urgency. It was now clear that the State of Israel was suppressing and denying the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people. The intifadah, its essentially political nature, the generally self-restrained moderation of the demonstrators, the high level of participation by Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and the violent and repressive nature of the Israeli response had demonstrated the reasonableness of the Palestinian cause and contributed to discernible shifts in the positions of some of the interested parties. He interpreted the acceptance by the PLO of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) as a signal of their acceptance of the West Bank and Gaza as constituting the territory of an eventual Palestinian State as well as their acceptance of the right of existence of the State of Israel. The renouncing of terrorism had to be seen as the PLO's acceptance of negotiation rather than violence as the means of reaching a peace accord with Israel. Analysing the United States position, he said that regardless of long-standing concerns, that country was willing to deal with the PLO, and to pursue a peaceful resolution of the Palestinian question within the confines of some kind of peace conference. Turning to Israel, he stated that, given the history of Arab-Israeli relations over the past four decades, its security concerns must be appreciated. But Israel's intransigence was clearly an obstacle to the peace process. The various political forces and factions in Israel found it difficult to devise a new and coherent response to the changing contours of the question of Palestine. He expressed the view that at the moment international public opinion was solidly behind the aspirations of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, while Israel was daily becoming more isolated and condemned.

61. In order to mobilize Latin American and Caribbean public opinion he recommended that Governments should support the framework given by Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973); that they exert pressure on Israel through diplomatic, trade, economic and other means; that they continue to support the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people; and that they sensitize their citizenry to the plight of the Palestinians. NGOs should, through the mass media, churches and trade unions, mobilize public opinion, exert pressure on national Governments, and support and observe nationally and internationally the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and similar commemorative activities. He concluded by recommending that Latin American and Caribbean Governments, NGOs and other organizations should continue to give maximal support to the Palestinian cause; that they should lend their voices and support for an international peace conference; that they should join the growing international demand for an end to Israeli abuses of the human rights of Palestinians in the occupied territories, including a cessation of the establishment of Jewish settlements in the West Bank; that the United States and the Soviet Union be urged to exert maximum influence in order to convene the international peace conference; and that, through the holding of national and regional seminars, and the observance of the International Day of Solidarity, Latin American public opinion be constantly kept informed of developments in regard to the question of Palestine.

62. Mr. Jean-Marie Lambert, Executive Director of the Office of the International Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine, referred to the past 42 years of the oppression of the Palestinian people and the current situation in the occupied territory and concluded that in view of the avalanche of human rights violations, the media in general were too silent and biased. He urged a struggle to be waged on two fronts. First, a concerted effort must be made to obtain all information from the occupied territories. He advised using press agencies situated in the occupied territories, to send missions of inquiry to the region and to arrange visits by Palestinians from the occupied territories, or better, to invite Israelis and Palestinians to meet with the media. Secondly, a sustained effort must be made to disseminate the news by using communication media to correct inaccurate news and oppose the law of silence of habit. With regard to Latin America, he said that it offered some good examples for changing the standard image of Israel as a democracy struggling for peace and a threatened nation whose security must be ensured. He argued that Israel was one of the powers which had sold the most weapons to a number of Latin American countries and had trained soldiers who had participated in organized repression by military dictatorships. In its relations with Latin America the State of Israel seemed more like a power that armed the executioners and reaped large benefits from arms sales and from military agreements.

63. He stressed that, in the area of the media, NGOs could be most effective in defending the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. They should move away from amateurism, mobilize themselves and co-ordinate their efforts. He highlighted the impact of the intifadah on the media and emphasized that it was a media operation without precedent, for which the Palestinians had paid a high price. As a result, it was today an accepted fact that an equitable solution was needed and that the Palestinian people had the right to a homeland.

64. He emphasized that current efforts had to be directed at the Israeli Government in order to make it accept negotiations and understand that there was a greater advantage in peace than in continuing the conflict indefinitely. One country could not fight indefinitely against a hostile international public opinion, nor against the opinion of its own public. He noted a change in Israeli public opinion, thanks to the struggle of peace forces in Israel. He concluded by saying that NGOs had the power to mobilize public opinion through media activities and political action, if they committed themselves to co-ordinated regional action in conjunction with international co-ordination.

65. Mr. Carlos Pachá, Chairman of Contemporary History at the National University of Córdoba, Argentina, said that in order to mobilize public opinion Latin Americans should use all media, not just the press. Organized courses should be geared primarily to people at the university level, who would eventually become the real opinion-makers. From his experience directing Causa Arabe, an organization for the study and dissemination of Arab culture and issues, he had obtained positive results by organizing basic courses at university level. He expressed the view that it was important to counter some dogma deriving from biblical studies which portrayed Palestinians as "Philistine invaders" and the invaders as legitimate inhabitants of the

land. Another concept which should be eradicated was that of the "Palestinian terrorist" as propagated by Jewish-dominated media. The myths surrounding the conflict should at all costs be dispelled and it should be presented as it was, a political problem, stripped of any of the religious or racial overtones. He emphasized that in disseminating news it was imperative in every instance that it be handled with great seriousness and that everything said or published be documented to give it the stamp of objectivity. He outlined a number of suggestions for effective use of newspapers, electronic media and other methods of disseminating information and influencing public opinion.

66. Mr. Manuel Felipe Sierra, journalist from Venezuela, expressed the view that there were many similarities and coincidences between the political situation in Latin America and the just and legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people for its inalienable rights. The struggle for independence and self-determination was a constant in the history of the Latin American countries. Breaking the bonds of colonialism, the struggle of the Latin American peoples had been aimed at achieving independence and economic sovereignty. He stressed that the struggle of the Palestinian people was one of the noblest examples of heroism and sacrifice in history. He emphasized that the process of Latin American independence and the struggle of the Palestinian people for self-determination were related and their main objectives were essentially the same. There was now a better understanding of the conflict to which the Palestinian people had fallen victim. The current problems made joint co-operation among the Latin American countries necessary but, at the same time, made it more vital to express solidarity with other unequal struggles being waged in other parts of the world, such as the struggle against racism in South Africa or that of the Palestinian people against another form of repugnant totalitarianism. He said that the globalization of the economy and of politics thus served to lead the peoples fighting for their freedom to work together and find areas of agreement. There was a need to raise the awareness of the general public in Latin America. Editorial policies should provide a good framework for a better understanding of the struggle of the Palestinian people. Today, it was clear that the independence and self-determination of peoples constituted a prerequisite for the achievement of peace. Only peace and the settlement of regional conflicts would create the basic conditions for the development of countries. He noted that the current conditions were ripe for developing a comprehensive understanding in Latin America of the Palestinian struggle. The intensive use of alternative information sources and the information apparatus of national organizations would help sensitize public opinion, which had an indirect influence on the mass media. He concluded by saying that the most effective means of persuasion lay in the legitimacy of the struggle of the Palestinian people.

67. Mr. William Waack, international news editor from Brazil, highlighted the extent to which the Middle East conflict figured in Brazilian public opinion, and how it was related to Brazil's independent foreign policy. He described how the descendants of Jewish and Palestinians immigrants influenced the presentation of the conflict to the Brazilian public. As a consequence of the domestic crisis in Brazil changes had taken place which could affect new foreign policy options, including the policy concerning the question of

Palestine. He said that Brazilians identified themselves with the news they received about events in the Middle East because of their own struggle for democracy. He expressed the view that under the military régime, Brazilians had more solidarity with the peoples of the world than they did today with democracy and freedom of the press. It was all the more important, therefore, to raise awareness at all levels with respect to the question of Palestine. He called for a fresh approach to the internal crisis in the Latin American countries, which might develop a new feeling of solidarity with peoples in the Middle East. There was a need to reduce somehow the great geographical and cultural distance between the peoples of Latin America and the Palestinians. In that regard he stressed the importance of such meetings and of exchanges of visits as well as the role of the NGOs.

C. Conclusions and recommendations

68. The participants in the Seminar expressed their conviction that recent developments regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, the question of Palestine, had created a new momentum for bringing about a solution to that complicated and dangerous conflict on the basis of the resolutions of the United Nations and within its framework. Those developments were mainly due to the courageous and determined struggle of the Palestinian people to attain and exercise its inalienable rights, primarily the right to self-determination, as dramatically manifested by the continuing Palestinian uprising, the intifadah, in the occupied Palestinian territory. The current international climate, the political will to resolve regional conflicts in a peaceful way through negotiations within the framework of the United Nations, was especially conducive to the achievement of a comprenhensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. It was imperative that that historic opportunity not be missed and that efforts be redoubled in 1990 to overcome remaining obstacles so that the process of negotiations could be initiated without delay.

69. The participants in the Seminar, in reviewing developments concerning the question of Palestine, welcomed the decisions adopted by the Palestine National Council at Algiers in November 1988 and the constructive position outlined by Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, in his address to the United Nations General Assembly at Geneva on 13 December 1988. Those developments, which led to the adoption of resolution 43/176 on 15 December 1988, became important landmarks in the international endeavours aimed at achieving a just settlement of the question of Palestine. The Seminar also noted with satisfaction the adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989. The participants were greatly encouraged by the vote on that balanced and comprehensive resolution, which was supported by an even larger number of States including Latin American and Caribbean States, and for the first time, almost all Western States and all members of the European Economic Community. That important development once again reflected the overwhelming support of the international community for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination.

70. The participants welcomed the fact that the Government of the United States of America had opened a dialogue with the PLO and emphasized that the scope of such a dialogue should be expanded to include the consideration in a constructive manner of substantive issues so as to enhance the process of negotiations leading to a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

71. The participants in the Seminar welcomed efforts by Israelis and Palestinians to engage in direct dialogue and joint activities as a way of promoting mutual understanding, as well as a process of reconciliation between the two sides and the creation of a climate more conducive to negotiations. They appreciated the recent initiative "1990, Time for Peace", of 29 to 31 December 1989 in Jerusalem where many persons including Israelis and Palestinians, demonstrated in support of peaceful negotiations, respect for civil and human rights and in support of the two States/two peoples principle. The participants considered that the United Nations should offer its good offices and organize appropriate activities to bring together Palestinians and Israelis under its auspices.

72. The participants noted that there existed a wide measure of agreement within the international community that a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East should be based on the principles outlined in General Assembly resolutions 43/176 of 15 December 1988 and 44/42 of 6 December 1989, namely: withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other Arab territories; acknowledgement of and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all the States in the region, including Israel and Palestine, and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries; and finally, a satisfactory solution of the Palestinian problem based on the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in the occupied Palestinian territory.

73. The participants expressed serious concern at the continued grave violations by Israel, the occupying Power, of the human rights of the civilian population in the occupied Palestinian territory, causing even greater suffering to the Palestinian people under occupation with far-reaching socio-economic, demographic and emotional consequences. The entire international community, as represented at the United Nations, has repeatedly declared that the Israeli policies and practices against the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory are in violation of the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949, which is fully binding on Israel, a party to the Convention, and also contrary to United Nations resolutions and to the generally recognized norms of international law. A matter of special concern for the participants was the suffering inflicted on Palestinian women and children as a result of the brutal Israeli practices. In the Gaza Strip particularly, new measures to control the movement of individuals produced inhumane and intolerable conditions.

74. The process of Israeli colonization of the Palestinian territory as manifested in the continued establishment of settlements, usurpation of land and water resources, and the brutality of settler vigilantism, was unequivocally rejected and condemned by the participants. They noted with appreciation that the entire international community had vigorously opposed the Israeli policy of establishing settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, which was in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention and stressed that Israel bore full responsibility for those illegal practices. The participants noted the expected increase in the number of Jewish immigrants to Israel and deplored the recent statements by the Government of Israel regarding the settlement of those immigrants in the occupied Palestinian territory. Any such action would be illegal and would complicate the attainment of a just and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine. The participants appealed to Governments to ensure that members of the Jewish community emigrating to Israel were not used as a tool to perpetuate Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory.

75. The participants were of the view that the Palestinian intifadah, was a clear manifestation of the popular, democratic expression of the collective will of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation that had given the struggle of the Palestinian people its hitherto suppressed identity, moral ascendancy and political maturity. The intifadah, now in its third year, embraced three dimensions: the overt and visible and fearless resistance to the Israeli occupation and, the indivisibility of the Palestinian people and its sole and legitimate leadership, the PLO; the opportunity for social transformation and nation-building as the embodiment of statehood through the establishment of an authentic, alternative popular infrastructure of the Palestinian society; and, finally, the intifadah was instrumental in bringing about a clear-cut political articulation and direction as manifested through the Palestine National Council decisions of November 1988. The participants supported the view expressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations that the message of the intifadah was direct and unequivocal, namely, that the Israeli occupation, which had been in effect for 22 years, was unacceptable and would continue to be rejected, and that the Palestinian people were committed and determined to exercise their legitimate political rights, including self-determination, no matter what the price would be for attainment of their objective.

76. The Seminar appealed to the international community and, in particular, to the Security Council to take urgent measures to ensure physical protection of the Palestinian people under occupation, to guarantee the safety and security and the legal and human rights of the Palestinian people in all the territories under Israeli occupation. They urged the Security Council to take into account the gravity of the acts of violence, human rights violations, including the so-called policy of "transfer" or deportation of Palestinians, which had been repeatedly condemned by the Security Council and the General Assembly, and other forms of repression by Israeli authorities against Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory, and assume and discharge its responsibilities and ensure protection of the Palestinian people under occupation. The participants stressed the de jure applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and demanded that Israel abide by the Convention.

77. The participants welcomed the courageous steps taken by the Palestinians during the intifadah to end the Israeli occupation and to set up an alternative infrastructure that could be used as a foundation for an independent and sovereign State of Palestine. The Seminar considered that intensified efforts towards genuine development of the occupied Palestinian territory, with the close involvement of the Palestinian people through its representative, the PLO, were a necessary corollary to renewed efforts to achieve a political solution of the question of Palestine.

78. The participants appealed to the Government of Israel to respond positively to the peace initiative by the PLO, which has been welcomed and praised by the international community. Israel should recognize that it could no longer ignore the national aspirations of the Palestinians and deny them their inalienable rights, in particular, their right to self-determination. The Seminar considered that the steps proposed by the Israeli Government were inadequate, since they did not include interim measures of protection for the Palestinian people and measures which would ensure that Palestinians would be enabled to exercise fully their right to self-determination. The participants called upon Israel to respond positively and with courage to international efforts aimed at a just and lasting political settlement of the question of Palestine which would be of benefit to all parties concerned including the international community as a whole.

79. The Seminar took note with appreciation of the continuing endeavours by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to advance the peace process, including the prospects for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The participants in the Seminar urged the Security Council to expedite the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, and to adopt interim measures including the deployment of a United Nations peace-keeping force to safeguard the physical security of the people of the occupied Palestinian territory and to bring about stability in the region pending agreement on a final comprehensive settlement.

80. The Seminar strongly endorsed the persistent efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to secure universal recognition of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, and urged the international community to sustain and strengthen their support for the Committee's activities and, in particular, its efforts aimed at facilitating the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

81. The Seminar took note with appreciation of the activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat and of its commitment to work, under the guidance of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, towards the attainment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East which would, inter alia, ensure the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

82. The participants in the Seminar were of the view that the United Nations should undertake additional efforts to disseminate factual and up-to-date information on the question of Palestine and on the measures required for the achievement of a just settlement to the question of Palestine. The Committee

on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights had an important role to play in the collection and dissemination of such information. For its part, the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat should make every effort to ensure that accurate information on the question of Palestine received the widest possible dissemination.

83. The Seminar noted with appreciation the steps taken by the States members of the European Community in promoting the convening of the International Peace Conference, and in providing increased assistance to the Palestinian people.

84. The Seminar noted with appreciation the sustained and continuing support by the Governments and peoples of the Latin American and Caribbean region for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its legitimate national rights and for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The position of those States was one of solidarity with and support for the struggle of the Palestinian people for an independent State of Palestine and for the exercise of its inalienable rights. In that context the Seminar stressed the importance of Governments of Latin American and Caribbean States establishing diplomatic representation with the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people or upgrading of existing arrangements, as the case may be, as a manifestation of solidarity of the countries of the region with the people of Palestine. At the same time, the participants stressed that it was of utmost importance that all States in the Latin American and Caribbean region be unanimous in their support for the United Nations resolutions establishing the path for a comprehensive, peaceful solution for the question of Palestine. The participants in the Seminar, in particular, expressed their appreciation to the Government of the Argentine Republic for its support of the cause of the Palestinian people and for the consistent support it had given to the question of Palestine at the United Nations.

85. The participants noted that Argentina was home of sizeable communities of Jews and Arabs who had arrived in various waves of immigration. They had prospered in peaceful coexistence, practising their religion, their traditions and their own customs, thus providing an excellent model for the people of Israel and Palestine to live together in peace and prosperity. The participants expressed their warm appreciation to the Government and the people of the Argentine Republic for providing a venue for the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, and for the facilities and warm hospitality extended to them. The meeting constituted an important contribution to the peace process related to the Middle East conflict and to the question of Palestine in particular.

II

REPORT OF THE FIRST UNITED NATIONS LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL NGO SYMPOSIUM ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

BUENOS AIRES
5 - 8 FEBRUARY 1990

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Introduction

1. The First United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 44/41 B of 6 December 1989, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in Buenos Aires from 5 to 8 February 1990. This symposium was held in part together with the Twenty-fourth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Fourth Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar) on the theme "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people" (see report above).

2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of H.E. Mr. Oscar Oramas-Oliva (Cuba), head of the delegation; H.E. Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta); H.E. Mr. Dragoslav Pejic (Yugoslavia); Mr. Zuhdi Labib Terzi (Palestine).

3. The meeting was attended by 26 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 2 of them participating as observers. Also present were the representatives of 34 Governments, Palestine, 2 United Nations organs, 3 United Nations specialized agencies and bodies, and 2 intergovernmental organizations.

4. Three panels were established for joint consideration by the Symposium and Seminar participants.

5. Two workshops specifically related to NGO activities were established for the Symposium to consider the following topics:

(a) "Mobilization and networking by NGOs to ensure the protection of, and promote assistance to, the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation";

(b) "NGO activities to further mobilize public opinion for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people".

6. The Symposium participants adopted unanimously a Declaration as well as action-oriented proposals emanating from the two workshops. They elected a Latin American and Caribbean Interim Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine.

A. Opening statements

7. A summary of the opening statements is included in the report of the Twenty-fourth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (see part I above, para. 4-35).

B. Panel discussion

8. A summary of the panel presentations is included in the attached report of the Twenty-fourth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (ibid., para. 36-67).

C. Declaration adopted by the First United Nations Latin American and Caribbean NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine

9. We, the Latin American non-governmental organizations (NGOs) meeting in the City of Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 5 to 8 February 1990, in the First United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, on the theme "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people", declare our support for the struggle of the Palestinian people for independence and national liberation, in exercise of its right to self-determination, as expressed in the heroic popular uprising, the intifadah, and through the diplomatic efforts deployed by the PLO, its sole and legitimate representative.

10. We welcome the declaration of independence of the State of Palestine adopted by the Palestine National Council at its historic meeting at Algiers on 15 November 1988. We urge all Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean to recognize the independent Palestinian State forthrightly and without delay. As a prior step, we call for the opening of diplomatic missions of Palestine.

11. We point out, that despite the considerable progress achieved at the international level in terms of peace, dialogue and co-operation, the question of Palestine continues to be one of the key conflicts threatening world peace, and is still awaiting a peaceful, just and lasting solution, despite the positive Palestinian peace proposals.

12. We reaffirm our commitment to continue working within the framework of the relevant resolutions adopted by the United Nations, in particular General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988 and resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989, which was approved by an overwhelming majority of 151 Member States.

13. We stress the importance of the role the United Nations can play in any peace process, recalling its contribution which culminated in the full independence of the Namibian people, which can serve as a source of inspiration for the Middle East.

14. We call upon the United Nations to take urgently all possible measures which will permit effect to be given to the whole body of resolutions adopted on the question of Palestine.

15. We support the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation

of all parties involved in the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing, and of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

16. We express our appreciation of the declaration by President Yasser Arafat at the United Nations General Assembly held in Geneva on 13 December 1988 in which he recognized the right of all States in the region to exist in peace and security, within secure and internationally recognized borders.

17. We call for the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, as well from all other occupied Arab territories.

18. We pronounce ourselves in favour of resolving the problem of the Palestinian refugees within the framework of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, and condemn any attempt to expel the Palestinians from their land.

19. We call for the immediate and total dismantling of the Jewish settlements established in the occupied territories since 1967, and condemn any policy designed to continue establishing new settlements.

20. We call on Governments and the competent international organizations to take measures to prevent Israel from settling Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union and other countries in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel, as the Israeli Prime Minister Y. Shamir has stated that they may be. We warn that bringing in new settlers will have harmful consequences for the Palestinians in the occupied territories, and recall that, inter alia, the Governments of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have made official statements opposing it.

21. We firmly reject all diversionary attempts or manoeuvres by the Israeli Government and others, to set obstacles in the way of negotiations for the establishment of the independent State of Palestine on Palestinian land.

22. We express our rejection and our strongest condemnation of the repressive methods and practices employed by the State of Israel against the Palestinian people. These have increased in extent and magnitude, affecting all sectors of the Palestinian population. The killings, beatings, mass arrests, expulsions, detention in concentration camps, sexual violence and imposition of curfews especially affect women and children and must end immediately.

23. We call for the immediate cessation of the policy of demolition of Palestinian housing, deforestation, confiscation of land and property, and the banning of sowing and harvesting.

24. We call for an immediate end to the press censorship as well as the imposition of penalties on those media which report the brutalities of the repression to which the Palestinians are subjected. The purpose of this censorship is to silence and weaken the international condemnation of these practices.

25. We call on the Israeli parliament, not to adopt amendment No. 3 to the Anti-terrorist Act of August 1989, which would give the State arbitrary powers to confiscate income and properties from the NGOs and would reduce the possibility of their receiving aid from international sources.

26. We reaffirm our support for the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people under the leadership of the PLO, its sole and legitimate representative, and for its unified national leadership, the protagonist of the intifadah, which has entered its victorious third year.

27. We call for effective international political and economic pressure on Israel to make it comply with its obligations under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 and accept United Nations resolutions.

28. We appeal to the United Nations Security Council to take the appropriate measures to ensure the necessary United Nations presence for the protection of the Palestinian people and to put an end to the human rights violations in the occupied territory and to bring the perpetrators of these practices to justice.

29. We recommend an expansion of the UNRWA Refugee Affairs Officer programme as a practical expression of international concern for the protection of the Palestinian people under occupation.

30. We also request that the specialized agencies of the United Nations pay greater attention to the Palestinian question, including by admitting the State of Palestine as a member, which will allow for an intensive exchange with the PLO and Palestinian NGOs with the aim of ensuring adequate coverage of needs in such sectors as education, health and development, without any control by Israel.

31. We condemn Israel's policy of closing Palestinian educational establishments in the occupied territories and all attempts to deprive children and young people of access to education. This practice is an insult to the norms which should govern the workings of a civilized society and violates a basic human right and we call for the immediate and unconditional reopening of all Palestinian educational establishments in the occupied territories.

32. We request Latin American and Caribbean educational establishments which maintain co-operation programmes with their Israeli counterparts to reconsider the terms of such co-operation so long as measures restricting education in the occupied territories remain in effect.

33. We warmly greet all peace-loving forces in Israel, and in the Jewish community abroad, that work vigorously in favour of the International Peace Conference and for the independent Palestinian State, under difficult conditions. We condemn the repression to which Israeli activists who advocate dialogue and peace have been subjected and the punishments meted out to Israeli soldiers who refused to suppress Palestinians in the occupied territories.

34. We welcome and support the initiative "1990 Time for Peace" taken by the European Peace Movement, the NGOs, Palestinian and Israeli peace-loving forces which demonstrated for peace on 28 - 30 December 1989 and we deplore the repression to which the Israeli, Palestinian, European and American participants were subjected.

35. We call upon Governments which co-operate with Israel in the arms field, especially the United States of America, to cease to do so and we denounce the danger posed to world peace and security by the collaboration between South Africa and Israel in the nuclear sphere.

36. We call upon the Latin American and Caribbean Governments to consider the possibility of applying economic, cultural and other sanctions against Israel as long as that country persists in its practice of violating the human rights of the Palestinian people.

37. We denounce the practices of the Government of Israel in Latin America, which takes the form of indiscriminate arms sales, the training of repressive groups and co-operation with dictatorial régimes and involvement in practices aimed at the destabilization of democratic Governments.

38. We call upon NGOs to work for dialogue and understanding among the Arab and Jewish communities in Latin America with a view to making a contribution to the peace process in the Middle East.

39. We request Latin American and Caribbean Governments to support the work of NGOs involved in promoting a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

40. We express our concern at the lack of information in Latin America on the question of Palestine, which hampers efforts to counter the systematic disinformation campaign orchestrated by pressure groups allied with the Israeli Government, and we request the United Nations to disseminate more information. We encourage also, all mass media in the region to provide better coverage about the Middle East problem.

41. We consider that the establishment of a Latin American and Caribbean Regional NGO Co-ordinating Committee on the Question of Palestine will be a significant step in the mobilization of public opinion for the achievement of a just and lasting solution of the problem under consideration. In this connection we seek maximum support from the United Nations and from the International Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine and other regional committees.

42. We thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights for having convened this meeting. We also thank the Government of Argentina for the hospitality it has shown to us and the facilities it placed at our disposal.

D. Workshop reports

Workshop I: "Mobilization and networking by NGOs to ensure the protection of, and promote assistance to, the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation"

I. Perception of the Palestinian people in Latin America

The fact that there is little awareness of the Palestinian problem in Latin America is due to the scant and often distorted information provided by the communications media, which have created an idea of "aggression and terrorism" involving both the Palestinian people and the PLO, its sole legitimate representative.

It was the seriousness of the events taking place in the occupied territories, the suffering experienced by families and repression in all its forms which gave rise to the intifadah as a heroic liberation struggle whose true scope and meaning have not been understood.

II. The intifadah

The popular uprising in which women, men, young people and children have participated has taken a heavy toll in human life since its inception. The Israeli army fires at the upper body, clearly demonstrating an intent to kill; soldiers enter hospitals armed, attack medical personnel and carry off the injured; expulsions, arrests, detentions and the destruction of homes and towns, trees and crops round out the overall picture of a people's suffering. Popular resistance to the occupation army cannot be compared to the terror that has been instituted as a matter of government policy.

I
and
II. Analysis

It is a mistake to believe that access to the communications media is all that is required, for the problem lies also in the fact that there is no widespread or ongoing effort to promote awareness of the Palestinian people's rights to self-determination, independence and sovereignty. It is for the Arab communities in Latin America on the one hand and the International Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICCP) and the United Nations on the other to provide NGOs with the necessary materials to reach the widest possible audience in an effort to neutralize Zionist influence on the information media, which portray the situation of the Arab world in general, and of Palestine in particular, as something exotic and legendary, overlooking the fact that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the focal point for world peace.

We believe that, in addition to the co-ordination office for Latin American NGOs which should be established on a provisional basis, every NGO in every country or city must undertake an objective analysis of local realities

and conditions so as to facilitate this task of dissemination. Accordingly, a common Latin American information centre should be established in co-operation with the official Palestinian information agencies; this Centre would catalogue, translate and disseminate information from the occupied territories regarding their situation and needs and opportunities for dissemination and/or collaboration in Latin America.

We should not forget that, in doing this, we have a major source of assistance in COPLAC (Confederación Palestina Latinoamericana y del Caribe), which is in itself a natural channel for the expression and realization of solidarity with the Palestinian people both inside and outside the occupied territories. If we add to this the assistance and work of various non-governmental, religious, trade union, political, intellectual, student and other organizations which can influence different segments of Latin American society, we find we have a broad range of coverage that will allow us to reach all the institutional networks in every country.

Our recommendations are aimed at promoting knowledge and awareness of the Palestinian people and a strong commitment of solidarity with that people. We therefore endorse all the proposals submitted by the Federación de Entidades Culturales Judías (ICUF), Central Latinoamericana de Trabajadores (CLAT), Consejo Argentino de la Paz, Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes (YMCA) and the Federación de Entidades Palestinas de la República Argentina.

CLAT: To uphold the freedom and human and civil rights of the Palestinian people as regards its self-determination, independence, sovereignty and peace and justice, based on a recognition of that people's inalienable right to live in its own land, to its own culture and identity and to its struggle for freedom under a just peace in a Palestinian homeland.

With regard to workers, we support the implementation of ILO and United Nations resolutions in the occupied Palestinian territories. We propose the establishment of study groups and the dispatching of a mission to observe the situation of Palestinian workers first-hand; this would be a joint undertaking involving those workers, CLAT and the Confederación Mundial del Trabajo (CMT) which would be open to other workers' organizations within the ILO framework and constitute a means of exerting pressure on Israeli trade unions.

ICUF: Proposals are to:

1. Urge Latin American NGOs to work together with militant pacifists in Israel, following an assessment of the local situation.

2. Organize, with the help of ICCP, the Palestinian Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations (headquartered at Tunis) and Israeli pacifist organizations, visits by joint Israeli and Palestinian delegations to Latin America.

3. Establish the necessary mechanism to support all peace marches both inside and outside the occupied territories organized under the slogan "Two peoples, two States", and calling for the protection of Palestinians' human and civil rights and a dialogue for peace.

WORLD PEACE COUNCIL and CONSEJO ARGENTINO DE LA PAZ: The task of promoting awareness in Latin America is based on the following considerations:

1. That the core of the Middle East problem is the genuine exercise by the Palestinian people of its rights, without which there can be no progress towards peace.

2. That an important military alliance exists between the United States of America and Israel and that the latter plays a leading role in, inter alia, the proliferation of weapons in our region, arms trafficking, collaboration with Latin American dictatorships and drug trafficking.

3. Support for General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 1988 and fostering the unity and co-ordination based on pluralism which must prevail within each regional committee.

4. That the time has come to make public opinion aware of the intifadah and the peace proposals of the PLO.

ASOCIACION CRISTIANA DE JOVENES (YMCA): The Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes proposes to:

1. Disseminate information about the Palestinian cause and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and promote awareness in Latin America of the type of justice to which it is subjected under subhuman conditions.

2. Increase solidarity and efforts via the YMCA by implementing long-term projects to improve the status of those who are being discriminated against under zionism.

3. Use reports brought back by the YMCA from the Palestinian territories and disseminate information about the subhuman situation of the Palestinian people.

4. Co-ordinate NGOs' activities with those of the YMCA in East Jerusalem. Activities are planned in three areas:

(a) Immediate and timely assistance to meet the most pressing needs (largely material in nature);

(b) Support for medium- and long-term grass-roots programmes and projects (primarily staffing);

(c) Pressure at official levels to find a permanent solution by attacking the causes of the problem and not only its symptoms (political nature).

Workshop II: "NGO activities to further mobilize public opinion for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people"

At the outset note was taken of what had been said by Palestinian journalists about the effort to attract solidarity with their homeland to help to secure independence. The following topics were discussed:

1. The situation in the occupied territories;

2. Assistance that can be given to strengthen the determination of the people in the territories.

The point was made that the effects of the intifadah have demonstrated that the Palestinian people deserves to have its own State and assume responsibility for its self-determination. In social terms, the uprising did away with the old order and forged closer bonds between the members of the community. The families of most modest means are receiving aid daily through various associations and trade unions. It was noted that, in the economic sector, the Palestinians have since the beginning of the intifadah been relying entirely on themselves for trade, having set up a large number of small-scale projects like agricultural co-operatives, since large-scale enterprises are bound to fail. The practical effect of the Israeli determination to make them collapse is their boycott of Arab products.

Politically, the Palestine National Council demonstrated its desire for peace by endorsing at its meeting in Algeria on 15 November 1988 Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), recognizing the Israeli State, and denouncing terrorism. The Israeli response was to use every possible means to block this decision to become independent, engaging in repression of organizations and individuals in the occupied territories, imposing curbs and attacking on all political fronts, and savagely putting down demonstrations, with a tragic toll of hundreds of dead and wounded and thousands imprisoned or expelled from their homeland. During the peace marches in the closing days of 1989 in Jerusalem, dozens were imprisoned, a number of them Europeans, including a member of the Italian Parliament; and the harsh repression cost one Italian pacifist the loss of an eye.

Humanitarian organizations are being closed down and their members detained, and the same is happening in the case of the press, which is being subjected to fierce censorship and the closure of publishing houses.

In the arts, the conditions are the same, there being no possibility for artists and writers to express themselves. Trade union offices are being closed down.

In the area of education, the "illiteracy policy" is proceeding apace, and schools and centres of higher learning are being closed as a "security measure". The professors are continuing to hold their classes in their own homes or in their automobiles, so that education has become a clandestine activity. Palestinian graduates are not being hired for jobs.

Where housing is concerned, lands are being confiscated in order to promote settlement by immigrants from Europe and the Soviet Union. Water resources and ground-water reserves are being taken over. Taxes are disproportionately high, and even though the European Common Market has authorized the importing of Palestinian exports, the Israeli authorities are "delaying" the shipment of these - perishable - products so that they will arrive in bad condition.

The Israeli State headed by the ultra-rightist Shamir says no to the PLO, no to the Palestinian State, no to the return of the illegally occupied territories, no to the inclusion of Jerusalem in a future settlement, no to the participation of Palestinians from the territories or from Jerusalem in such a settlement and no to the United Nations resolutions. On the other hand, it is saying yes to the illegal settlements, to the immigration of Jews into the occupied territories and to brutal and inhuman repression. The answer to how we can contribute is by establishing cultural exchange relations in addition to other far-reaching steps.

The influence that public opinion can have was emphasized, in the sense that it can oblige Governments to change course, develop means of communication, and take account of what the people want. By way of example, the Viet Nam war was cited, as a result of which environmental and feminist groups were successfully mobilized in the United States. It was also pointed out that Governments keep track of expressions of public opinion.

In the case of the intifadah, the press has participated in the conspiracy of silence and NGOs, in conjunction with the United Nations, supply the missing framework, because in times of crisis NGOs become notably more active.

As for our Latin American Governments, they have maintained a consistent attitude towards the United Nations resolutions, but even so the task of mobilizing the political circles to take decisions, the press to give adequate coverage and NGOs to contribute information will be a hard one.

Contributions of other participants

It was noted that the Israeli policy in the occupied territories has aroused great alarm among the progressive sectors in our country. Not only is a policy of "silence" being practiced but also a policy of "disinformation" on the part of the Jewish members of Argentine society tied to Israeli interests; and therefore the suggestion has been made to raise the consciousness of all the sectors that have been disinformed, with emphasis on the importance of an Arab/Jewish dialogue to combat Zionist policy. In this connection, note was taken of the confiscation of fax machines and a ban on their use, the total censorship of every word published, including advertisements, literary articles and condolences, copies of which must be sent to the military censor, who thus becomes the de facto managing editor of every publication, deleting words or entire articles.

Non-Jewish sectors do not have the courage to fight against this Zionist policy for fear of being labelled anti-Semitic. The "myths" surrounding the Jewish positions that follow Israeli policy must be dispelled. The mistaken ideas of zionism must be shaken off.

Conclusions and summary of recommendations

- Establishing cultural exchange relations;

- Having political figures of all persuasions and scientific and cultural figures give lectures;

- Creating associations of friendship with the Palestinian people;

- Extending the Arab/Jewish dialogue and starting a campaign against Zionist policy;

- Launching regional campaigns on "the recognition of the Palestinian State and the opening of diplomatic offices";

- Setting up an information centre in a Latin American capital to publicize news of the intifadah;

- Assisting in the publication of books by Palestinian authors;

- Appealing to the media to give adequate coverage to the question of the Palestinian people.

E. Latin American and Caribbean Interim Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine

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Annex I

MESSAGE TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF ISRAEL ADOPTED BY THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SEMINAR AND NGO SYMPOSIUM ON 5 FEBRUARY 1990

The participants in the United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, which is being held in Buenos Aires, deeply regret the decision of the Israeli authorities to deny travel permits to Mr. Hanna Al-Atrash and Mr. Ziad Abu Zayyad, who had been invited by the United Nations to participate in the Seminar and NGO Symposium. It is further regretted that such a decision deprives the participants in the meeting of the possibility of sharing information and experiences with those personalities and of joining with them in searching for the means to achieve a peaceful and just settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East.

The participants consider this decision as contrary to the rights of freedom of movement and of unimpeded travel to United Nations meetings, which are convened for the purpose of promoting dialogue between the parties and for a peaceful resolution of conflicts.

The participants, accordingly, urge the Israeli authorities to reconsider their decision and to allow Mr. Al-Atrash and Mr. Abu Zayyad to travel to Buenos Aires in order to contribute to the deliberations of the Seminar and the NGO Symposium.

Annex II

MESSAGE FROM THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SEMINAR AND THE NGO SYMPOSIUM TO H.E. MR. YASSER ARAFAT, CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION

We, the participants in the United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, being held from 5 to 9 February 1990, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, wish to express our deepest gratitude for your gracious message of support conveyed to the Seminar and NGO Symposium by H.E. Mr. Ahmad Sobeh, Officer-in-charge of the Palestine section at the League of Arab States in Brazil. We take this opportunity to applaud the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and endorse your efforts to open a substantive dialogue for peace in the Middle East and to introduce a new way of thinking about the future.

We reaffirm our solid support for the struggle of the Palestinian people to exercise its legitimate and inalienable national rights, as dramatically demonstrated over the past two years in the intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory. We salute the historic Palestinian peace initiative launched by the nineteenth extraordinary session of the Palestine National Council, held at Algiers from 12 to 15 November 1988, and in particular the proclamation of the State of Palestine, as a bold and significant contribution towards the achievement of peace in the Middle East.

We sincerely hope that the results of the Seminar and the NGO Symposium will contribute positively to the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the full realization of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State.

Annex III

MOTION OF THANKS

The participants in the United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, being held from 5 to 9 February 1990 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, express their profound thanks to the Government and people of Argentina for generously providing a venue for this meeting and for the excellent arrangements made which greatly contributed to its success. The participants wish also to convey their sincere gratitude and appreciation to H.E. Dr. Alfredo Carim Yoma, Secretary of State for Special Affairs, for his statement of warm support for the Palestinian cause and our Seminar and NGO Symposium. The participants wish to express their appreciation also to H.E. Mr. Jorge Taiana, Under-Secretary for Foreign Policy, and H.E. Mr. Victor Beauge, Director-General for International Organizations in the Ministry of Foreign Relations, for their contribution to the Seminar and the NGO Symposium. The participants take this opportunity to convey their sincere appreciation to the Government and people of Argentina, for their support for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for the active role they have played in advancing the cause of peace and justice in the Middle East on the basis of the Charter and the resolutions of the United Nations.

Annex IV

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS

Panelists and Resource Persons

Mr. Juan ABUGATTAS (Peru)
Mrs. Janice ABUSHAKRAH (Palestinian)
Ms. Wejdan AL-BORNO (Palestinian)
Archbishop Hilarion CAPUCCI (Palestinian)
Mr. Pedro CATELLA (Argentina)
Mr. Juan Carlos GIACOSA (European Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine)
Mr. Thomas W. GITTENS (Guyana)
Mr. Ali KHASHAN (Palestinian)
Mr. Amos KENAN (Israel)
Mr. Jean-Marie LAMBERT (Office of the International Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine)
Mr. Luciano OZORIO ROSA (Brazil)
Mr. Carlos PACHA (Argentina)
Mr. Isam Kamel SALEM (Palestinian)
Mrs. Francisca SAUQUILLO (Spain)
Mr. Manuel Felipe SIERRA (Venezuela)
Mr. Ricardo VALERO (Mexico)
H.E. Mr. Alberto VELAZCO-SAN JOSE (Cuba)
Mr. William WAACK (Brazil)
Mr. Salah Eddin Ali ZUHEIKEH (Palestinian)

Delegation of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

H.E. Mr. Oscar Oramas-Oliva
Deputy Foreign Minister of Cuba
Vice-Chairman of the Committee

H.E. Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations
Rapporteur of the Committee

H.E. Mr. Dragoslav Pejic
Permanent Representative of Yugoslavia to the United Nations

Mr. Zuhdi Labib Terzi
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations

Representative of the Secretary-General

Mr. Naseem Mirza
Chief, Division for Palestinian Rights

Member States

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H. E. Mr. Piro Andoni
Ambassador in Buenos Aires

Mr. Kudret Kraja
Embassy in Buenos Aires

ALGERIA

H.E. Mr. Abdallah Feddal
Ambassador in Buenos Aires

Mr. Mohamed Ouarab
Embassy in Buenos Aires

Mr. Lacheraf

ARGENTINA

Mr. Luis Alcón Palus
Minister
Directorate for Africa and the Near East

Mr. Bernardo Ochoa
Secretary
Directorate for Africa and the Near East

Ms. Flavia Regazzoli
Adviser
Undersecretariat for Human and Women's Rights

Ms. Valeria Pavón
Adviser
Undersecretariat for Human and Women's Rights

Mr. Marcelo Paciorek
Adviser to the Secretary of State for Special Affairs

Dr. Luis Roque Carbonari
Secretary of Embassy

Ms. María Rosa Milos
Directorate-General for Press

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CHILE	Mr. Rodrigo Perez, First Secretary Embassy in Buenos Aires
CHINA	Mr. Xie Rumao, Counsellor Embassy in Buenos Aires
COTE D'IVOIRE	Mr. Ahipeaud Guebo Noel Emmanuel Chargé d'Affaires Embassy in Buenos Aires
CZECHOSLOVAKIA	Mr. Vackay Skarohlid, Counsellor Embassy in Buenos Aires
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	Mrs. María Simo Embassy in Buenos Aires
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	Mr. Hadi O. Sabhan Embassy in Buenos Aires
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PHILIPPINES	Hon. Sime D. Hidalgo Ambassador in Buenos Aires
	Hon. Bonifacio P. Arribas Director General, Office of Middle East and African Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Manila
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	Mr. Juryus Zgheib, Counsellor Embassy in Buenos Aires
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	Mr. Hilmi Dedeoglu, Third Secretary Embassy in Buenos Aires
UKRAINIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC	Mr. Vladimir Lapitski, First Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR
UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS	H.E. Mr. Vladislovas K. Mikuchyauskas Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Lithuanian SSR
	Mr. Vladimir N. Khanzhenkov Expert, Department of International Organizations, USSR Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Mr. Alexander Dogadin
Embassy in Buenos Aires

VENEZUELA

Ms. Zaida Rauseo Rojas
Embassy in Buenos Aires

YUGOSLAVIA

H.E. Mr. Rudolf Mazuran
Ambassador in Buenos Aires

Mr. Nikola Cuk
Embassy in Buenos Aires

Non-member States represented by Observers

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

H.E. Mr. Sang Chin Lee,
Ambassador in Buenos Aires

Mr. Jung Ho Keum, Counsellor,
Permanent Observer Mission
to the United Nations

Mr. Dong Ryun Shin, Counsellor,
Embassy in Buenos Aires

United Nations organs

Special Committee on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

H.E. Mr. Oscar Oramas-Oliva
Deputy Foreign Minister of Cuba

Special Committee against Apartheid

Mr. Virendra Gupta
Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations
Rapporteur of the Committee

United Nations specialized agencies and bodies

ILO	Mr. J.G. López Guizar Deputy Director of the ILO Office in Buenos Aires
UNRWA	Mr. William Gayard Deputy Chief of External Relations
	Mr. Jabr Nabahin Senior External Relations Officer
UNHCR	Mr. Gordon Lennox

Intergovernmental organizations having received a standing invitation to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly as observers

League of Arab States	Mr. Sufian Barazi Chargé d'Affaires

Other organizations having received a standing invitation to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly as observers

PALESTINE	Mr. Ahmad Sobeh Officer-in-charge of the Palestine section at the League of Arab States in Brazil
	Mr. Hussein Abdel-Khlip

Non-governmental organizations

ASOCIACION LATINOAMERICANA PARA LOS DERECHOS HUMANOS

Mr. Miguel MONSERRAT

ASOCIACION PRO NACIONES UNIDAS DE ARGENTINA

Mr. Marcelo LOPEZ ALFONSIN

CENTRAL LATINOAMERICANA DE TRABAJADORES

Mr. Carlos GAITAN
Mr. Ibar LUCERO
Mrs. Margarita María LLAMBIAS
Mrs. Liliane HISSE

CENTRO CULTURAL ARGENTINO-PALESTINO "SAMAID"

Mr. Rafael ARAYA AL MASRI
Mrs. Stella Maris HORVAT
Mr. Miriam Hussein DIB HAJ OMMAR
Mrs. Fátima AMADO
Mr. Rodolfo Alfredo PROTO
Mrs. María Teresa MORELLI
Mr. Luis María CASADO LEDO
Mr. Omar HAZIMEH
Mr. Zahed ABU SHARRAB
Mr. Bernardo AMIGO
Mr. Eduardo ZUAIN
Mr. Maha Hussein Dib Haj OMMAR
Mr. Daniel MARTINEZ
Mrs Daniela JOZAMI
Mr. Gabriel ABU-GHOSH

CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS LEGALES Y SOCIALES

Mr. Octavio CARSEN

CENTRO PARA EL ESTUDIO DEL MOVIMIENTO DE LOS PAISES NO ALINEADOS (CEMOAL)

Mr. Saad CHEDID
Mr. Luis JORGE
Mr. José Eduardo MACHICOTE
Mr. Martin CUCORESSE
Mr. Alejandro FALCO

CONFEDERACION DE ENTIDADES ARGENTINO-ARABES (FEARAB)

	Mr. Horacio MUNIR HADDAD
	Mrs. Susanna GNOCCHI DE NOVO
	Mr. Sattam AL KADDOUR
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	Mr. Carlos Horacio CAGNI
	Mr. Guillermo Lorenzo SANCHEZ
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La Unión Alauita*	Mr. Juan SALAYA
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	Dr. José Manuel LOPEZ BERTRAN
	Dr. Marta JALUF
	Mrs. Liliana CAZORLA
	Mrs. Gladis JOZAMI
	Mr. Daniel ABBAS
	Dr. Miquel ELIAS
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	Dr. Miguel KAYAT

* These organizations belong to FEARAB

CONFEDERACION LATINOAMERICANA DE ACJS
(Latin American Confederation of YMCA)

Mr. Rolando DALMAS

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Dr. Maisar OMAR
Mrs. Karina KHALED
Mr. Samia ALI
Mrs. Marisa WERLE HUSEIN
Mrs. Fida'a MUSLEH
Mr. David MUSA
Mr. Ali RAMADAN
Mr. Osama OTHMAN
Mr. Nader BAJA
Mr. Christaki MASAD
Mr. Oscar Daniel JADUE

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Mr. Luis VALENGA

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Mr. Héctor Eduardo BOCCO
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Dr. Juan María LASSALLE

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